

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. TERRI A. SEWELL**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 9, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6) to accelerate the discovery, development, and delivery of 21st century cures, and for other purposes:

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Chair, today, I stand in strong support of the 21st Century Cures Act. This bipartisan bill gives our nation's best and brightest the tools they need to understand—and eventually defeat disease—and reauthorizes both the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The 21st Century Cures Act has the potential to accelerate the discovery of drugs for life-threatening illnesses; repurpose drugs found ineffective for one condition and test them on another; promote an interoperable health system; enhance telehealth practices; and advance the development of more targeted, personalized treatments.

My district, the 7th Congressional District of Alabama, is home to the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Southern Research Institute, and the University of Alabama. NIH funding is critical to the continuing vitality of these three leading institutions, as well as to the region.

The prospect of this act alone provides hope. Hope that cures can be discovered, hope that one day no diagnoses indicate inevitable ailment or death, and hope that one day treatments will yield more reward than risk.

Despite the potential of this bill, there are two amendments that threaten that hope and essentially aim to inhibit the health of several Americans. First, the Hyde Amendment has reared its ugly head yet again. It is a harmful and discriminatory bill that prevents women from making their own healthcare decisions. Further, it serves as a stark contradiction to efforts geared toward providing health positive resources for all.

Second, the Brat amendment aims to convert the federal funding of the NIH and the FDA from mandatory to discretionary. Such a transaction would stifle the progress both federal agencies have already made and will continue to make. It will singlehandedly reverse the trajectory of medical progress and halt further research efforts.

I am particularly supportive of the 21st Century Cures Act because of its inclusion of provisions for the pediatric and rare disease community. This bill will allow Children's of Alabama, ranked among the nation's best children's hospitals for six years in a row, to finally be able to participate in a national pediatric research network and therefore, save more lives.

With only 5 percent of rare diseases having an FDA-approved treatment, it would be a

gross understatement to say our medical systems have failed to keep pace. Gabe Griffin from Birmingham and Houston Sides from Montgomery are two young Alabama boys who asked me to support the 21st Century Cures Act because it modernizes the FDA and spurs development of pediatric and rare disease treatments. Gabe and Houston have a rare and deadly muscle-wasting disorder called Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. This disease takes the lives of children as young as 9 or 10. Very few children with this disease will ever reach the age of 25. But the 21st Century Cures Act provides hope for these families. It promotes 'precision medicine,' modernizes the clinical trial system, and expands access to investigational drugs.

Viruses and diseases will not wait for us to catch up; they will mutate, grow ever more virulent, and continue to impact our public health. We need to leverage our investments to make potentially game-changing strides in treatment. We need 21st century solutions for 21st century threats.

An investment in health affects more than our physical well-being, and the 21st Century Cures Act reflects this. H.R. 6 is not only a health bill; it is a jobs bill. Our country has been the leader in both the medical device and biopharmaceutical industry for decades, helping us become the core of global medical innovation. This puts a target on our backs, as China and other countries have attempted to attempt to claim this role and thus, our jobs. U.S. medical device-related employment totals over 2 million jobs, and the U.S. biopharmaceutical industry is responsible for over 4 million U.S. jobs. NIH funding currently supports over 400,000 jobs at research institutions across the country, including jobs for young and upcoming scientists. Without this funding, our jobs are out there for the taking. Without this funding, the thousands of jobs in my district provided by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Southern Research Institute, and the University of Alabama are not safe. The policies in this legislation will help us fight off foreign competitors and allow us to continue innovating, so we can all protect medical jobs in our districts and add more.

We must get serious about addressing the unmet medical needs of the American people. I urge my colleagues not to deprive the American people of the cures they deserve. Vote against these poison pill amendments because when it comes to the health of our constituents, there is no place or time for partisan politics. I urge my colleagues to oppose the Brat amendment, support the Lee amendment and I urge them to support H.R. 6.

RECOGNIZING COL. RICHARD J. MURASKI, JR.'S SERVICE TO FORT WORTH AND AMERICA

**HON. KAY GRANGER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 2015*

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Deputy Commander of the Southwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Colonel Richard J. Muraski, Jr.

Colonel Muraski is retiring after a long and impressive career in the Army. In Fort Worth we are particularly grateful for his work on the Trinity River Vision, which is a vital part of Fort Worth's future.

He played a critical role in the implementation of the highest standard of Flood Risk Management. His programmatic approach and respect for others fostered excellent communication and solutions.

Colonel Muraski led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District Staff in the planning, engineering and design of the existing Fort Worth floodway and the new Central City Project.

Colonel Muraski is a native of Kansas City, MO, and earned a Bachelor's degree in Geology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio and a Master of Science degree in Geodetic Sciences from Purdue University.

During his career he has served in a variety of operational, command and staff assignments in the United States and overseas. He deployed with a National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency support team to Afghanistan and Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Colonel Muraski assumed command of the 588th Engineer Battalion in June 2004. Under the Army's modular reorganization, he transformed the 588th into the Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade. The battalion deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in November 2005 and was responsible for the majority of Babil Province, conducting combat operations along with training Iraqi security forces.

The City of Fort Worth and our country owe Colonel Muraski a debt of gratitude for his work.

HONORING SERGEANT JAMES R. STEPHENSON

**HON. JARED HUFFMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 2015*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Sergeant James R. Stephenson as he prepares to retire from the Petaluma Police Department on July 31, 2015. With over twenty-five years of exemplary service as a police officer, twenty-one of these have been with the City of Petaluma where Sergeant Stephenson has been instrumental in building

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